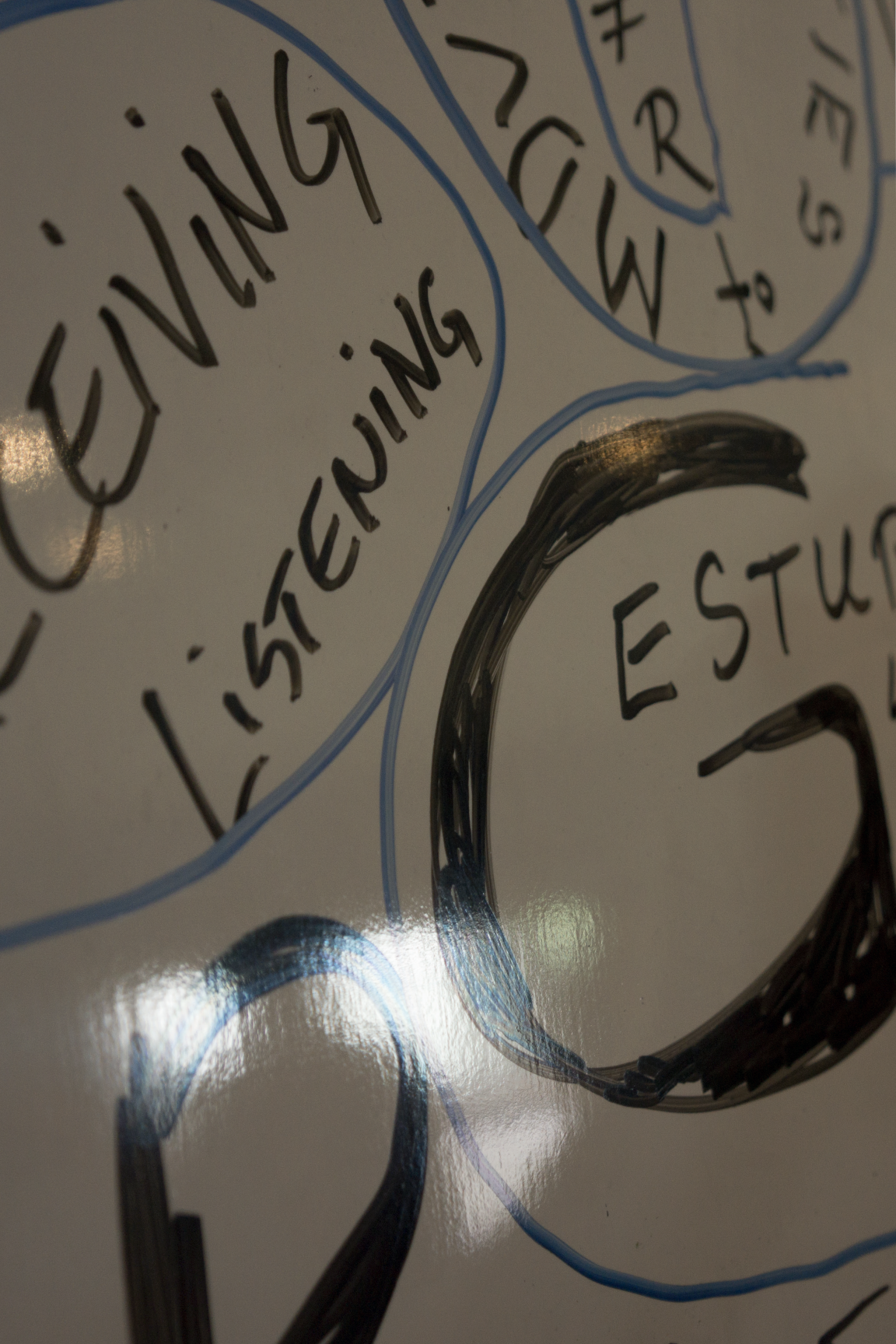


**A report of my experience at
The Michael Chekhov School
in Hudson, New York**

Bernadette Wintsch-Heinen



Michael Chekhov School
2016



EVENING
LISTENING

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“Our profession can be very important in our cultural life, and in creating the cultural life of the future. If you understand this you will know what you’re aiming at and why you are going through all these difficulties, because you are serving certain ideas which can bring good to the whole of humanity. Don’t think that when you are acting in New York you don’t influence the whole world. You do. When you’re acting badly you don’t influence anyone. But if you do something really significant, then you influence the whole world. If you act well today, you will see the result of your good acting in another part of the earth. It will not be so obvious immediately, but the streams are coming and going around the whole earth. If you get the idea of what it means to have a real theater, you will discover that you are really doing something on the right basis, which will influence the whole earth. [...] The reason for this talk was that I want you to realize and make concrete the idea of our school, to work for it and for the whole human culture. But without making our first steps we cannot hope to go on, and for this purpose we must exercise our Method.”

Michael Chekhov, August 30th, 1939

CONTENTS

TO LEARN AND TO FORGET	1
THE BALL	4
EXERCISES	6
PERSONAL ATMOSPHERE	8
OBJECTIVE ATMOSPHERE	10
RADIATING AND RECEIVING WITH TEXT	13
QUOTES FROM STUDENTS	20
JOANNA'S AUDITIONING CLASS	23
THE ART OF THE ENSEMBLE	25
THE THEATER OF THE FUTURE AND THE NEW ACTOR	27
THE CREATIVE INDIVIDUALITY	28

TO LEARN AND TO FORGET

The first day

It is October 19th, a beautiful fall day and the beginning of my 2-week internship at the newly-founded Michael Chekhov School in Hudson, New York. In my hand I have the address: 360 Warren Street, and the starting time: 9:30 a.m. I'm walking along the road full of anticipation, expectation and excitement. The address is easy to find. It is a red brick building and the home of an organization that works with special needs people. For the upcoming two weeks it is also the home of this new school, which has taken residency at the top level of the building.

As I step in front of the main entrance, I meet Ragnar Freidank, one of the teachers and founders of the school. He is in the process of trying to navigate a 3 x 4 feet white board out of his car. This board is covered with words and there is not one free space on it. It seems very chaotic and unordered but as I look more closely, I discover the names of different tools of the Michael Chekhov Technique. For instance: imagination; concentration; the four brothers (sense of ease, sense of form, sense of the whole, sense of beauty); the three sisters (falling, floating, balancing); atmosphere; objective atmosphere; subjective atmosphere; sensation; psychophysical; psychological gesture; giving and receiving; opening and closing; archetype; quality of

movement; ensemble; inspiration.

In my mind the concepts are travelling into each other, through each other, under each other, over each other. I ask him if I can help and as a response he gives me the whole board and says, “Oh yeah, maybe you can carry it up and then I can re-park the car.”

“Yeah, of course”, I say, “I’m delighted to carry the whole technique up the stairs with me”, and I’m slightly amused. I’m also thankful to have something to do and that I can be useful. I travel with this big thing up three stories until I arrive at the room where we will be working.

As I enter the room, it is full of light and inviting. The atmosphere is light and joyful, full of life and expectation. People are greeting each other here and there, embracing each other here and there and after a while I observe how a few of the participants are trying to wipe clean the big white board that I have carried up. It seems to be met with some difficulty. The technique is not so easily gotten rid of. Some of them are trying it with a cloth. Some are trying with water. Fern Sloan, another teacher and founder of the school, has the idea that it might be easiest to erase it with the fingers and within the shortest amount of time almost everybody is leaning over the white board engaged in the attempt to make the technique disappear.



As I'm sitting further away from everybody, taking in this picture, I'm reminded of the words of Michael Chekhov:

"First we must know, then we must forget. We must know and then be. For this aim we need a method. Because without it, it is not possible to know and then to forget. When we reach this point then we will be the new actor."

On what level does a technique address the actor? On a bodily level? A vocal level? The level of the soul? The level of inspiration? Is a technique necessary at all for an actor? And if yes, what kind of technique? Despite all of this I am again and again experiencing many voices that don't share these convictions. Is this the zeitgeist? Is this the spirit

of the times? Is this the fashion of the day? Is it because we have a dominating director's and conceptual theater, which these days, at least, are very prevalent in the German-speaking area? Is it because of that, that a technique for the actor seems superfluous? Has theater in itself changed fundamentally? Or our understanding of what a technique is?

THE BALL

The lesson, or, it is better to say, the explorations, are beginning. Ted Pugh, also a teacher and co-founder of this new Michael Chekhov School, is throwing a ball towards the still busy, excited participants. Gradually a circle is formed and the ball is flying from one person to the next. Still everything appears quite unfocused, without shape, haphazard. What is the difference between personality and a human being? What happens when we are making contact with our partner as a human being and throw the ball from that experience? And receiving the ball from that experience? "We don't have any idea, but let's find out. Let's explore." These are the words I hear Ted Pugh speak. This atmosphere of polite smiles or hysterical laughter, this atmosphere of haphazardness and excitement begins to change. A talking stillness emerges. The movements of throwing take on clear direction, from the back to the front. They take more space. There is a preparation which creates an impulse and the following

throw. And there is a resonance, a listening after. The balls that are flying hardly ever fall on the ground anymore. They reach the other person more directly. And the receiving of the ball begins to be sensed with the hands and via the hands, with the whole body. So that the fact of receiving the ball becomes a sensory experience, a sensory understanding. Sometimes communication via the ball becomes “feel-able” and visible. This simple activity of giving and receiving a ball becomes something I can experience. Experience in its whole vividness, colorful and different from human being to human being. Different from one moment to the next. This posing of questions and listening begins to develop in all the participating actors during these two weeks in the most impressive way. The more attentiveness that accompanies these explorations, the more the essential nature of things appears without any effort and with full clarity.

Is this not a contradiction? Is not personality the very thing that defines an actor? And defines a person or a human being at all? But what I am witnessing seems to be the opposite. The more the personal attributes and seemingly special talents make way for a space of discovery and meeting, the more I am experiencing the sensations of things. The more the *wish* is taking space, or making space, to meet the phenomenon of life, the more *creativity* is emerging and is shaping the artistic expression.

EXERCISES

All these exercises by Michael Chekhov are not really exercises in the usual sense. Rather they give us the opportunity to recognize human phenomena and to deal with them more consciously. Be it for the actor on the stage, or during a rehearsal, or be it in the actor's life. Be it for any person who is interested in the depth and richness of life. In that sense each lesson at this school is also a lesson about what it is to be a human being and it is in this that the wholeness of life is participating in each lesson.

Georg Tabori (1914 – 2007) was a playwright, actor, speaker, writer, translator, dramaturg and game-maker. He explicitly refused to call himself director. For many years he worked with a group of theater makers outside of the conventional theater in Germany until a moment where the conditions, especially the financial conditions, did not allow him to do so anymore. At that point he switched over to the big theaters. His productions were very well regarded and during a conversation on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, he stood up in all clarity for a human theater. This is what comes to mind while I'm experiencing my first lesson at the Michael Chekhov School here in Hudson:

*“It is indeed so, large-scale experiments
take place in established theaters and not in*

small theatrical groups. But, as far as these experiments are concerned, they are mostly of formal and aesthetic interest. But, in my opinion, theater has still quite another dimension: humanity. Theater is first of all the human being and not the building nor the dramaturgy. That means first of all we have a group of human beings who are on the stage, and then we have another group of human beings in the audience. Traditionally, established theaters have neither time, nor necessity to explore this human dimension. Which is too bad, because the human, the moral and the political are at the core of the theater.”



PERSONAL ATMOSPHERE

Another day

Today what we are going to work with is personal atmosphere. And because this is the first lesson of the day, I decide to join and to return to my role as the observer at a later point during the day. So, after the warm up I hear Fern's voice say, "you are surrounded by the atmosphere of laughter. This atmosphere is around you and you yourself decide how close you let this atmosphere get to you. Maybe this atmosphere is touching your skin, maybe this atmosphere is penetrating a little bit deeper under your skin." I'm listening to these words and my playing and searching of this has begun.

After a while I pull myself out of the play and sit down on my chair. I am still really in touch with this laughing atmosphere and I take my notes and pen in my hand when I hear the atmosphere is changing. It is the atmosphere of tears. From one moment to the next I am sensing as if something is travelling down my spine and all of a sudden tears are streaming over my face. Although I am not even part of the playing area any longer, I decide to follow this phenomenon and to observe myself while I do that. What's happening to me? I don't have any reason to cry. I could also stop anytime if I wanted to, but I still would like to explore this phenomenon a bit further. My whole body is crying. "Is there a movement, a quality in this atmosphere?" I hear

the next coaching from Fern. Yes, really, there is something moving down, like a spiral. Those are round, soft and yet, definite movements. I follow these movements a little bit, although I am sitting on my chair. “What kind of character could that be?” That’s another sentence I hear Fern say. I see a road, I see houses that are only ruins at this point. They’ve been leveled. It’s an area in which there must be war. I see wounded children on that road, that have been shot. There is a woman, her face is not easily seen, but she has a broad forehead, and then there is this black cloth. The woman is a bit larger and feels very soft. And now I see her eyes which are wide open, full of terror. She’s leaning over her dead son, shot by the military, who are still all standing on the square, the rifles aimed at people. A despair is flooding across her face. She yells. She presses the dead body of her son onto her chest and she’s kneeling on the earth and then she is looking up. Full of rage and pain she is hurling the words “Murderer, murderer, murderer” into the face of the soldiers. Had I been in the playing area I most certainly would have played out all of this. But in my case I released the image again, full of thankfulness because of the clarity of this pathway.

And at that moment I hear the next suggestion from Fern. The smell of roses, another subjective atmosphere...

OBJECTIVE ATMOSPHERE

Another day

Today we are dealing with objective atmosphere. I am sitting on my chair with the stern intention to not let myself be tempted again to join the playing but to remain an observer. And again, for one more time I am not able to do it, to just remain a neutral observer. Moreover, I become an audience member, or maybe a witness of a situation, which is taking hold of my whole being. I am deeply moved because of the actuality, the timeliness of everything that is happening in this instructional space. The students are sitting on the edge of the playing area and they have their eyes closed. They are listening to the descriptions of a place. It is the image of a village, which has been destroyed by war. As soon as they see this place in their imagination, they begin to move into the playing area and create that place through an understanding of the senses. How various and rich, all the students begin to bring these images to life. It is very impressive how much time is given to the students in this improvisation. I see ruins of houses, people without orientation, without a sense of direction, trying to gain a foothold again in the village, which was their home once. Insecure, helpless. There is someone who in great detail is trying to quench his hunger with something that is barely edible. There is somebody else who is trying to quench his thirst with some water from a puddle. Others are full of

despair or lethargy, looking for a few things that they might still salvage from the ruins of their destroyed houses. The danger is coming from outside. Soldiers are still firing bullets through the village. It is this danger that is forcing the people to leave their home. They have to leave behind the most precious things they love. Or if they can, they try to bring it with them. Without disrupting the flow of the play, with fine sensitivity for the emerging atmosphere, very simply, without much ado, I hear little suggestions coming in from the teacher, like, “How can you support this moment with one particular tool? Maybe it’s the opening or the closing, maybe it’s more of a giving, or more of a receiving. Maybe it’s following the sensation. Maybe it’s a movement.” These very simple things make it possible for the whole question of refugees, which is so important and actual these days, to appear in front of me. Human beings escaping, and what this could mean.

It is not primarily just about technique. It is about how technique makes it possible for this story, which resides somewhere in the bodies, in the minds, in the feelings of the students, to emerge and take hold of me from the very first minute. The creative potential of these young artists is experiencing its true force of expression through this technique. Michael Chekhov himself wrote the following words about this phenomenon:

“Now I want you to make the effort to understand that our technique is a very scientific one, not only an artistic one, which can be something which kills or revives and develops, it depends entirely upon the student, and the teacher can do nothing but tell what he has to tell. If you are taking our technique – this is the psychological approach – if you are taking it as something which you must put inside of you instead of your desire to act, you are making a great mistake. If you are trying to keep your childish desire to act and you take our technique by saying to yourself, “First of all I want to act, and now I will take the technique and see how it can help me to act,” that is the right approach.”

It’s exactly that which I have just experienced in the most impressive way. It is the same as one of Michael Chekhov’s guiding principles:

“The actor must use intangible means of expression while acting and rehearsing to achieve tangible results”.

The reflection that followed in the class was dominated by a discussion about today’s refugee crisis and

today's refugee policy. How can theater react towards that? Should it react? In which form? Do we in theater even have the right to take such biographies and use them? Or do we have to be the ones speaking up for these people? In all this, it isn't a matter of technique anymore, but a matter of theater, of incorporation. Technique is a means to support all our thoughts, wishes, hopes and visions.



RADIATING AND RECEIVING WITH TEXT

Another day

A longer warm up in which the elements of giving and receiving and opening and closing are researched anew is now followed by the first approach towards text. We are working with scenes from “Antigone” by Jean Anouilh. For two hours the students are sitting across from each other.

They are exploring the movements of Creon and Haemon or Ismene and Antigone. They experiment with giving and receiving, or, if they so like, with opening and closing. They read the text. There is no long analytical preparation, there's just a very short sketching of the story of the play and the story of the scene. What I see and hear is once again, like during the work with atmosphere, anything but an exercise. The eyes of the students become more focused. I observe that they are clearly looking towards the partner, clearly looking away from the partner, clearly looking to the side, clearly looking up, clearly looking down. Their bodies begin to become very subtle. Because they are sitting on a chair, they begin to move in subtle ways but in very clear directions, sometimes forward, sometimes up, sometimes forward and down, sometimes back, back up, back down depending on the idea which is manifesting in them.

This makes me think of the expression "An idea is giving you direction". Do ideas have direction? So it seems. The breath of the students is taking on more life and is supporting more and more the direction of the body. The more alive the breath becomes, the more alive appear the movements. The piece has begun to pull me into its spell. Haemon, Creon, Antigone and Ismene begin to quarrel, to love, to mourn, to win. They're lost, or they're without measure. They're confused, they're decided, depending totally on who is exploring the scene at that moment. Again

and again new interpretations open up. New possibilities, new directions and new visions towards the scene open up and in that way also a new understanding of the play. The theater that is taking place in this space is living and immediate. It invites me to participate in a process of discovery because the characters themselves, along with the actors, are travelling through a process.

How is it possible that these young students can so truthfully speak of a fate that they have had no chance of experiencing in their short lives? Rolf Boysen, a German actor (1920-2014), wrote in his book, *Thoughts about Theater*, the following:

“The question is: how do you achieve full empathy with a character. To do that you have to refuse to listen to the judge that is with you all your life. You have to achieve open-mindedness. But how so? Kortner, a German director, once said, “Make space for the expression”. That was his admonition to the actor. But how do you make space? Well, there is most space in an empty space. That’s nothing new. For instance, imagine the Karlsplatz in Munich, or the Place de la Concorde in Paris, or Picadilly Circus in London. Imagine any of these squares totally empty without a person

in them. With which acuteness, with which specificity would you be able to see each detail on that square. In this state of openness, in this empty space I can begin to notice the character that will have to be nurtured by me. Expression is not a process of transformation but a process of recognition. Recognition paired with a powerful marvel. Marvel at what you are recognizing. Marvel over something that knows no boundaries. Marvel over being lost, marvel over transgression, marvel over love and tears and craziness, confusion, victories, defeats. All these experiences are new to the actor because his own transgression, his own being lost, his own tears, his own victories and his own defeats are of a totally different kind. Can the actor ever really become all that he has recognized in marvel about his character? No. All he can do is wrap his humanity around those poor lifeless words his character has to speak. All he can do is take the story of his character into his own emptiness, into his own openness and begin to tell his audience about it using his own head, his own voice, his own body.”

This is what I thought of while I was part of this

lesson. Once again the student actors are receiving a very clear tool with which they can engage in their exploration. But what emerges is more than an exercise. Sometimes they seem to me larger than they are in life, as if they are taking on a different fate which is launching them into new worlds. Does all this have to do with the fact that the tools Michael Chekhov is talking about come from our human condition? That they contain archetypal behavior? That they are gleaned from the artistic process, the creative process? And when we give ourselves over to these explorations, is it then that we can also transcend ourselves into the dimension of the beings that have been written on a page? Is this the kind of transformation that Michael Chekhov is talking about? Does all of this have to do with the fact that each tool of Michael Chekhov's contains a kernel or a seed of the creative moment and thus gives us the possibility to call it



up at will? What I've been witnessing is the beginning of truthful expressions. It is only in the experiencing of the text that the written word takes on life.

The last day

Today is the last day. I feel sadness because of how fast this immensely rich time has past, and I am sitting on my chair again and looking across the room. At this very moment the students are experimenting with the three centers: thinking, feeling and willing. How different they appear. Over a time of just two weeks their faces are now more open, their bodies are moving easily and still full of power and expression. That which was held inside at the beginning of these two weeks, hidden behind wrinkled brows now transforms their outer appearance. A dense, lively, joyful and playful atmosphere has taken hold of the room. More and more the actors' essences appear and share essential things with each other. Each discovery is turning into a true event, or, how Chekhov describes it, "a little work of art". They are so fully engaged in everything that I can't divert my eyes from them and all of a sudden my sadness has totally disappeared and has been replaced by a great inquisitiveness and excitement. Again and again during these lessons moments appear for me which are essential for my understanding of theater. Moments which describe the human being. Not knowing, confusion and uncertainty are as much allowed to be in this room as are certainty and

confidence, joy as much as pain, curious and crazy moments as much as clear and simple moments. I am thinking to myself, this is true rehearsal. In German rehearsal is *Probe*, which means to try, to try it out, try it out and have some fun. I wish for these students that they will always be able to integrate these qualities, this courage and this joy in any of the works that will come their way in the future.

What makes this work so full of life? Is it the courage and the generosity with which they seem to play again and again, each time anew instead of following a pre-fabricated opinion? Sure, but I believe it is more the space that is created here in Hudson by the teachers. Fern Sloan, Ted Pugh, Ragnar Freidank, they teach with great passion and patience for what they're doing. This leads to a space which is, with all its clearness, open and inviting. There is also a great well-founded knowledge of this method, which is combined with an inquisitiveness and joy of experimentation that seems to never end. There is the willingness to go with what is happening. And there's humor. Humor, which in difficult moments generates a certain lightness and there is much, much more. With care and respect for the creativity of each student, the technique is being passed on. A technique that helps to call out the creative potential of these young people and helps them to broaden that potential. There is urgency and concentration towards the work as well as spaciousness in discovery and, most of all, there is love, passion and

enthusiasm for theater.

Ted Pugh and Fern Sloan are both actors and both Michael Chekhov teachers. They have worked successfully for decades on American stages and they are still, next to their teaching, working as actors. Their experience acts as an impressive, yet quiet and humble power in the room. It is always about the theater, about the human being making theater. Despite their great treasure of experience, each day is new, surprising and experimental for them. Ragnar Freidank, who has acted both in Germany and America and has also directed, brings a spirit of inquisitiveness that seems never to tire. The students cannot stay outside of that spell and so begin, equally enthusiastically, to experiment.

QUOTES FROM STUDENTS

The students describe their training here in Hudson as a space in which they feel they are being taken seriously as players. A space which is being researched and discovered with them. They feel held in a space characterized by deep wisdom of this technique, as well as courage to experiment. Their words convey to what depth they feel they're being received. They write:

“Chekhovs’s physical immersions challenged me to embrace what is most primal of being human, infused with the vast

capabilities of my imagination.”

“It is then that my body is without judgment or predetermination of what it ought to be, but just is. It is then, that I am not just working with a part of this technique, but that I am the technique, therefore it is no longer a technique. I was able to reach untapped energies and be guided by a limitless awareness of my innate self that was ignored, forgotten or shaped by my nature/nurtured environment. These are some of the things that I’ve experienced while participating in Chekhov work that I will continue to utilize within myself as a performer and as a human being in daily life.”

“I’m drawn to the Chekhov work because it puts an emphasis on approaching acting in a creative way.”

“Images, sensations, imagination... all were pulled out of the realm of the abstract and were explored. I want to say released, into form and action. Into play. The joy and play, not at the sacrifice of the serious, but inspired by it, is one of the things that makes me want to immerse myself further in the Chekhov work.”

“My main mentors in acting school were Method teachers, who taught me the universal is found in the personal. I feel that in working with the Michael Chekhov technique, I see

how the personal is found in the universal or archetypal. In my perspective, the two methods are not enemies, but rather they both ask the actor for the truth of the moment, nothing more. The danger in both is ego and it overriding the creative act.”

“I’ve found this active, mostly effortless exploration to be fascinating and pleasurable as its artistic roots are deep yet very basic in nature. I found when engaged and free within a Chekhov activity it can be felt on a cellular level. It is then that my body is without judgment or predetermination of what it ought to be, but just is.”

“I feel that Chekhov’s technique can lead me places that I usually strive to get to.”

“Once I began to trust what my body was telling or showing me, creating came naturally to me.”

“The best thing I can work on right now is doing: getting myself out there and applying this wonderful, magical way of creating my art through freedom, courage and imagination.”

“I love meeting the images and finding how the inner becomes the outer. I love the exploration and collaboration between image and actor.”

“What do I most need to work on? Taking ownership of the questioning and exploration.”

“I imagine sharing the things I have learned through my art as a performer in hopes of inspiring others with this remarkable technique that Chekhov has gifted us through our beautiful teachers, who continue to follow in his footsteps.”



JOANNA’S AUDITIONING CLASS

There is so much more I would like say. I would like to tell about the lesson with Joanna Merlin. She is the only living student of Michael Chekhov’s and was part of the core faculty this fall. She herself is an actress, a teacher of the Michael Chekhov Technique and was a casting director in New York City. During two days she lead the

young acting students towards the situation of auditioning. The atmosphere in the space is tense and full of expectation because it is today that the students will prove themselves in front of the camera. While camera and sound is being set up, I hear Joanna say, “Until the equipment is all set up, let’s work a bit with opening. Do it with your whole body and let it radiate out. Okay, let’s try opening with staccato. And now do the same thing inwardly.” The students begin to work and within the shortest amount of time they seem to be present, open and ready to embark on the adventure of auditioning. The high degree of professional experience that Joanna Merlin brought to this class, her knowledge, which is a living knowledge of the Chekhov technique, and her unending inquisitiveness towards the human being and towards how a student deals with an exercise she’s proposing, makes her lesson an experience that leaves a deep impression on all the people who have had the privilege to be there. Attentive and full of clarity, Joanna Merlin guides these young people in the situation of an audition. Framed in an understanding atmosphere, it is here that they can experience the harshness of this profession. They will be able to be in conflict with it and, alas, grow. Because of this, these lessons in auditioning are at the same time lessons about courage, attention and responsibility towards your own talent.

There is still more I want to talk about. I want to talk about the many improvisations that made it possible

to notice our inner voices and ghosts, and to use them in our playing. All of the beliefs that we carry around with us, which influence our thinking, feeling and doing, are a vast field of richness for the artistic expression and a never ending source of inspiration when we are just noticing them and including them in our play.

I would also like to tell you about all the other different ways of approaching characters, be it through sensation, imaginary body, gesture, stick-ball-veil, the centers, quality of movement and again and again atmosphere. I want to talk about how all these different tools of the technique are beginning to move into each other, under each other, through each other, over each other. How one aspect is contained in another. How, through all of this, the most varied, playful approach to acting is opening up. I want to tell you about the power of ensemble work. How this power, at one time or another, has carried every single one of the actors in the room and has created space for their development.

THE ART OF THE ENSEMBLE

I want to tell you about the inner wish of these young people, who treasure this kind of ensemble work deeply. Michael Chekhov spoke of a theater of the future and of a new actor. Bernd Stegemann, a German theater artist, wrote in his article *For an artists' theater today – The art of*

ensemble acting and the threat of a producer's theater:

“What I find extraordinary in relation to Max Reinhardt's plans was not that he placed the art of the actor, or the art of acting at the center of the theater, but that he looked at the art of acting not as the talent of a single genius, of a single virtuoso, but as the art of an ensemble. An ensemble for Max Reinhardt was not a nice mixture of primarily great actors, but an artistic force of productivity through which each single actor could become better than he is and which, through the play between people, would lead to a higher quality of acting than possible for a single virtuoso.

Reinhardt tried to imitate the art of a playing ensemble that he saw in the Moscow Art Theater founded by Konstantin Stanislavski and Nemirovitch Danchenko. There the art of the ensemble was developed and, through its touring productions, influenced the whole world. In this kind of theater, ensemble acting is the basis for the individual actor's art.”



THE THEATER OF THE FUTURE AND THE NEW ACTOR

Michael Chekhov, starting in 1913, was a member of the Moscow Art Theater. In 1922 he took on the leadership of the first studio of the Moscow Art Theater, and in 1929 he also worked with Max Reinhardt. During this time Michael Chekhov wrote again and again about a theater of the future and the new actor. His whole life he fought or he put himself out there, he advocated looking at the actor as an independent artist who would collaborate as an equal with directors and with his colleagues, exploring the material. Michael Chekhov wrote about this in *To the Actor*:

“The dramatic art is a collective art and therefore, however talented the actor may be, he will not be able to make full use of his ability to improvise if he isolates himself from the ensemble, his partners”

“The actor must develop within himself a sensitivity to the creative impulses of others. And he needs in a high degree to develop artistic courage and awareness of style.”

“[...] Each member of the group should say to himself: the creative ensemble consists of individuals and must never be considered by me as an impersonal mass. I appreciate the individual existence of each and every one present in this room and in my mind they do not lose their identity.”

THE CREATIVE INDIVIDUALITY

During my two weeks at this school, I saw that kind of power with which one person is supporting the other in their development. It is this power that has made it possible for the student actors to enter new worlds. Is this the idea that Michael Chekhov talked about when he spoke about creative individuality, the power of the ensemble and how

the individual actor, through the power of the ensemble, can rise above himself? Is this still the vision for a future of the theater? Is this the theater of the future? Is this then the new actor that Michael Chekhov talked about?

My deepest thanks to my fellow student actors, who have allowed me to observe their explorations and to join their research. My deepest thanks to Fern Sloan, Ted Pugh, Joanna Merlin and Ragnar Freidank for their generosity in welcoming me into their classes.

Deeply touched, deeply impressed and full of inspiration I am returning home.

Bernadette Wintsch-Heinen

Actor and Teacher for Cognitive Studies

Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, Switzerland



Translation: Ragnar Freidank

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PUSH
THROW
SMASH
REACH
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EDOM

IDEAL
THINKING
FEELING
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